



The President's Daily Brief

April 8, 1976

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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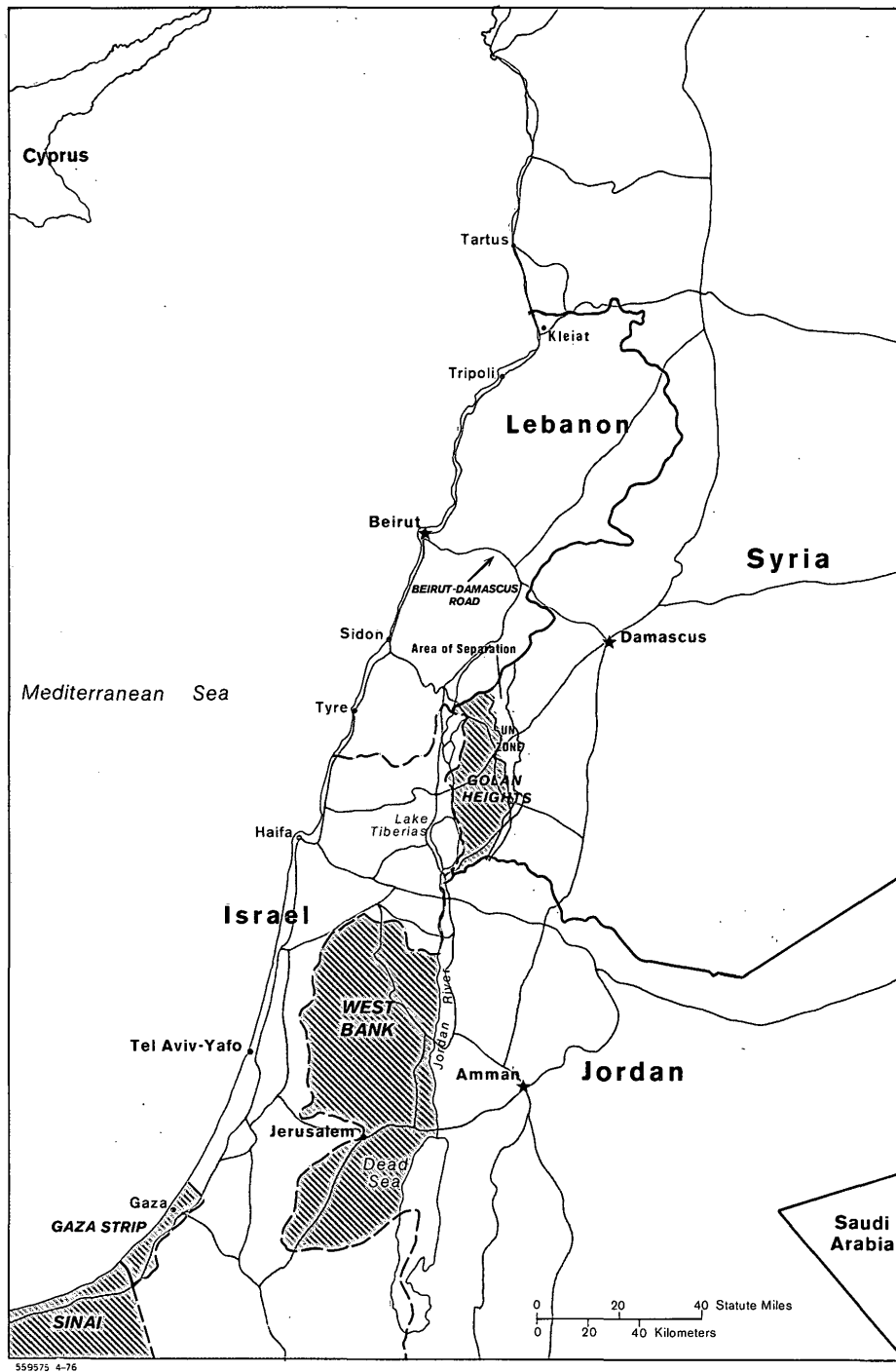
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LEBANON: *The Syrian naval blockade of the northern Lebanese port of Tripoli remains in force and may now be supported by helicopters. Syrian helicopters have reportedly been assisting a Syrian ground force that crossed into northern Lebanon on Tuesday. That force may have as many as 2,000 troops and some 100 to 150 vehicles, including armored personnel carriers.*

These troops are said to be wearing uniforms of the Syrian-controlled Saiqa fedayeen organization. Their mission appears to be to control the area between Tripoli and the air base at Kleiat.

The Syrians presumably have chosen to move increased numbers of Syrian regulars into Tripoli rather than into central or southern Lebanese cities to minimize the chance of an Israeli countermove into southern Lebanon. Damascus may calculate that Tel Aviv will continue to tolerate a gradual Syrian buildup inside Lebanon if Syrian troops are disguised as fedayeen and do not have armored units.

The great danger in the Syrian move is that it might fail in its intention to intimidate the Lebanese leftists, yet through lack of Israeli reaction cause Damascus to misjudge the limits of Israeli tolerance for a similar move in central or southern Lebanon. 25X1



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A French government spokesman announced yesterday that Georges Gorse, a former minister and diplomat, will leave for Lebanon today on a "fact-finding" mission, as opposed to a "mediation effort." Gorse accompanied Maurice Couve de Murville on his unsuccessful mediation mission last November. If Gorse is well received, it is likely that Couve will also return to Beirut.

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USSR/LEBANON: *The most authoritative Soviet statement to date on Lebanon appears today in a Pravda article signed by "Observer," to denote the Kremlin's endorsement.*

"Observer" terms the current ceasefire agreement "a new, positive element." The article welcomes Syrian mediation efforts and calls for "the preservation of a united, integral, and independent Lebanese state."

The article charges that it is "naive" to view the events in Lebanon as solely a manifestation of Christian-Muslim strife. Rather, it says the conflict was unleashed by Israelis and "imperialist forces" bent on diverting Arab attention from efforts to liberate the Israeli-occupied Arab territories, weakening Palestinian resistance, and dividing Lebanese territory.

The way the US is singled out is new. One paragraph condemns the movements of the Sixth Fleet toward Lebanon, "the fully bankrupt 'from the position of strength' policy which some political circles dream of reviving," and Senator Jackson's "openly calling for landing the US Marines on Lebanese soil."

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"Observer" closes with a call for a maximum effort to consolidate the cease-fire and to normalize the situation. The article acknowledges that Lebanon remains tense and that "a good deal of combustible material has accrued." It warns that another outburst would be "fraught with still graver consequences" for Lebanon and for the entire Middle East.

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CHINA: *The Central Committee's announcement that Teng Hsiao-ping has been dismissed from all his positions inside and outside the party was specifically linked to the demonstrations last Monday.*

Teng and his supporters appeared to have badly overplayed their hand by arranging the demonstrations. A month or more earlier, a party directive had indicated that Teng was in a relatively good position to survive the attacks on him. It reportedly stated that Teng was not to be "struck down," and that his case was different from those of party leaders purged in the recent past.

The demonstrations and the wide international coverage given them, however, clearly angered and embarrassed Mao and the left, and may have enabled them to win the support of moderates for Teng's removal.

Although the decision on Teng's case was "unanimous," indicating his supporters had abandoned him, concessions from the left may well have been involved. One such concession could be the end of the current political campaign. The reappearance yesterday of Politburo member Li Hsien-nien, one of Teng's staunchest backers, who had been absent from public view since mid-January, suggests that other supporters of Teng will not suffer.

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The appointment of Hua Kuo-feng-- who is not in the leftist camp-- as premier and as first vice chairman of the party over Wang Hung-wen, a young party leftist, may also be part of a compromise solution. The reappearance of Li Hsien-nien, the party's leading economic specialist, suggests that Teng's ambitious economic policies may continue with little change.

Teng's backers may have agreed to drop their support of him once they were assured that the relatively moderate Hua would be promoted to a party position of sufficient importance to give him a major voice in policy issues.

Hua's new position is second only to that of Mao. Hua is closely identified with Teng's agricultural policies. As acting premier, he frequently indicated there would be no change in China's foreign policy. Others in the leadership, who may have opposed the abrasive Teng for personal reasons, may now close ranks with those who personally supported Teng, thus giving the moderates a major voice in policy matters.

Yesterday's decisions do not provide a long-term solution to China's leadership problems. A People's Daily editorial acknowledged on Tuesday--for the second time--that the central committee of the party remains split. Given the depth of public sentiment revealed on Monday and the relatively powerful position of the moderates in positions of authority throughout the country, a "backlash" against the left is still a real possibility.

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Another round of struggle is almost
certainly in the cards, perhaps
even before Mao dies. 25X1

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USSR:



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NOTES

India and China have agreed to exchange ambassadors for the first time since their border war in 1962.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi probably believes that establishing diplomatic relations with Peking will demonstrate India's independence of its closest ally, the USSR, and refurbish New Delhi's nonaligned image. Gandhi is concerned about China's close relations with Pakistan, good relations with Nepal and Sri Lanka, and improving relations with Bangladesh.

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Iran has broken diplomatic ties with Cuba over a publicized meeting last month between Cuban Prime Minister Castro and the leader of the outlawed Iranian Communist Party.

The two men met in Moscow while attending the Soviet party congress. The Shah regards the incident as a gross intervention in Iran's internal affairs. He also probably intends his action to signal Iranian opposition to what he regards as Cuban adventurism in Angola and in the southern Arabian peninsula, where Cuba has been supporting guerrillas seeking to overthrow the Shah's ally, the Sultan of Oman.

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